

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 26, 27, 29, 32, 39, 40, 42, and 47-52 remain pending in the application, with claims 26 and 39 being the independent claims. By this Amendment, claims 21-25, 30, 33-38, 41, and 43-46 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims 51 and 52 have been added.

Based on the above Amendments and the following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Objections to the Claims

The Office Action on page 2, in section 2, objects to claims 47, 49, and 50 because of informalities. Claims 47, 49, and 50 have been amended to remove the noted informalities. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this objection be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Office Action on pages 2-3 in sections 3-4, rejects claim 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 30 has been cancelled, thus

rendering this rejection moot. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action on page 4, in section 6, rejects claims 21-25, 34-38, 41, and 44, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,057,744 to Ikada in view of Japanese Patent No. 5-167388 to Igata et al. Claims 21-25, 34-38, 41, and 44 have been cancelled, thus rendering this rejection moot. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

The Office Action on page 4 in section 7, rejects claims 21-24, 34-37, 41 and 43 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent No. 11-68512 to Oguri et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,057,744 to Ikada. Claims 21-24, 34-37, 41 and 43 have been cancelled, thus rendering this rejection moot. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

The Office Action on page 4, in section 8, rejects claims 33, 45, and 46 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,057,744 to Ikada in view of Japanese Patent No. 5-167388 to Igata et al, as applied to claims 21 and 34 above, and further in view of Japanese Patent No. 6-97761 to Hirasawa et al. Claims 33, 45, and 46 have been cancelled, thus rendering this rejection moot. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action on page 4 in section 9, the Examiner states that claims 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 39, 40, 42, and 47-50 are allowable over the prior art. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. Applicant respectfully requests that claims 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 39, 40, 42, and 47-50 be allowed. New claims 51 and 52 depend from claims 26 and 39, respectfully, and are allowable as depending from an allowable claim. Hence, Applicant respectfully requests that claims 51 and 52 also be allowed.

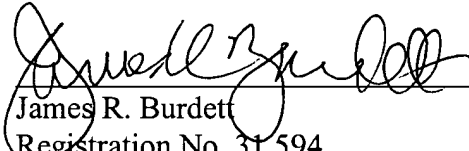
CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicant believes that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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